

## ***Forgo Green Beer – Here's your Guide to Celebrating St. Patrick's Day with Irish Whiskey***

As you prepare for St. Patrick's Day festivities, consider lending authentic Irish charm to your celebrations by treating your guests to a taste of award-winning Irish Whiskeys. Martha Harrison, whiskey specialist and President of Connexion Oenophilia, answers a few questions and shares the following tips for enjoying your dram all the more.

### **Whiskey or Whisky?**

It's whiskey – with an "e" – if you're talking Irish whiskey. Scotch is another matter (it's written "whisky" without an "e"). Since we're talking Irish here... it's whiskey.

### **What Type of Glass?**

Why bring home a bottle of top class Irish Whiskey and spoil the tasting experience by serving it in a glass or tumbler that does not deliver the aromas and flavour in the best possible way?

Of course you can enjoy whiskey in a generic tumbler, which is generally the way it would be served in a bar or pub. But if you're at home, and in a relaxed atmosphere, serving whiskey in a Single Malt whiskey glass or an "aged spirits" glass will greatly enhance your tasting experience. Some fine examples include The Glencairn glass, Riedel Single Malt Glass, the Eisch Breathable Glass (which comes with a lid) and the Schott Zwiesel "Top Ten" Cask Aged Spirits Glass.

### **A FEW TIPS**

#### **Neat or On the Rocks?**

- **Water:** Adding just a tiny bit (use the cap of a bottle of water to measure) will open up the aromas immensely. Most whisky aficionados taste with a splash of water. A neutral bottled water is better, rather than a sparkling water or a bottled water with a high mineral content.
- **Ice cubes:** Not a great idea. In Scotland and Ireland adding ice cubes would be frowned on.
- **Warming and swishing (aerating):** Enhances the experience, if you are using a single malt glass such as the Schott Zwiesel "Top Ten" Cask Aged Spirits Glass or Riedel Single Malt glass
- **Storage:** Simply keep the bottle tightly corked, and the whiskey can last for several months after opening.

## How do Whiskey's pair with food?

Irish Whiskey is great for before and after dinner, and marries well with a great range of **appetizers, desserts and even main course dishes**. Some whiskies can work throughout the meal.

**Here are a few examples of Irish whiskies currently available, with some food pairing ideas:**

If you prefer a sweeter, mellower style of whiskey, try ***The Tyrconnell Single Malt Irish Whiskey***. Distilled in the old Irish tradition, this pure pot still Single Malt whiskey uses only the most natural Irish ingredients of barley and fresh spring water producing a beautifully balanced whiskey with distinctive smooth fruity palate. It is divine with a range of desserts such as **caramelized figs, crème brûlée and gingered pastries**.

***Connemara Peated Single Malt Irish Whiskey*** retains the smooth taste of an Irish but has a peated taste more associated with some Scotch whiskies. It is a delicious match **with smoked fish appetizers, such as sturgeon, trout or salmon and even smoked mussels**.

***Greenore 8 Year Old Single Grain Irish Whiskey*** - Grain whiskey is made from maize (corn) producing a beautifully smooth, sweet taste. When this is coupled with the creamy vanilla notes achieved from maturation in exclusively ex-bourbon casks, the result is the distinct taste of Greenore Single Grain Irish Whiskey. Delicious before dinner, or with a dessert such as **crème brûlée**.

***Connemara 12 Year Old Single Malt Irish Whiskey*** - This multi-award winning small batch whiskey gives Connemara consumers the ability to taste how extra aging brings out more character from the wood and rounds off the taste of the regular Connemara. Try with **fruit cake or dark chocolate** for a perfect finish to a fine evening with friends.

**Slainte!**

**These whiskies are all widely available in Ontario in LCBO Vintages outlets.**

**Connemara Peated Single Malt Irish Whiskey and The Tyrconnell Single Malt Irish Whiskey are also available in Quebec, in selected SAQ stores.**

These whiskeys are all produced by Cooley Distillery, Ireland's only independent, Irish-owned distillery. Cooley was founded in 1987 by John Teeling, an Irish entrepreneur who was unhappy with the monopoly in Irish whiskey by only one producer and recognized the potential for a traditional, quality oriented distillery. He revived several historic brands including The Tyrconnell Single Malt Irish Whiskey that had been so very popular in the United States prior to prohibition, and revived ancient distilling techniques

such as using peat to dry malting barley leading to the creation of the family of Connemara Peated Single Malt Irish Whiskeys.

In the prestigious 2008 International Wine and Spirits Competition, held in London, England, Cooley Distillery became the first Irish Distillery ever to win the coveted World and European Distiller of the Year Awards. These trophies are awarded to the distillery that demonstrates the highest quality in its range of spirits brands, which is exactly what Cooley achieved winning 9 gold medals and 8 Best in Class beating tough competitors such as Hine Cognacs from France and numerous Single Malt distillers from Scotland.

**For more information, interviews and photos contact**

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